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POETRY QUARTERLY

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EDITORIAL

THIS Summer issue appears at the most critical moment in our history, perhaps of the history of the world. When normally we should be thinking only of the greenness and beauty of the season of flowers and the poets who sing of them, we are possessed with the feeling of being ready to defend a thing we hold more dear than life itself—freedom to say what is in our hearts, to live the kind of life that seems best to us. We listen not for the note of the nightingale but for the sound of bursting bombs. This editorial is written in the quiet room of an old house whose walls are covered with the portraits of armoured men and pictures of old battles against other barbarians of long ago. Outside in the garden the roses are again unfailing in their mute splendour, the coloured glory of an English summer. Perhaps the time for words is past. Shelley wrote: "Words are weak. All words are so No help."

In the event of the impossibility of continuing any work in this country not of a belligerent or productive character, our American Editor has generously offered to carry on publication in the United States. It will not be the first time that English men of letters have looked towards the great continent for salvation—and found it.

GEORGE CRABBE, 1754-1832.

By

SAMUEL J. LOOKER.

PARTS of the Suffolk coast are still bleak and desolate. The grey pitiless ocean resounds on a low, marshy shore, which every year loses some of its length to the encroaching waters. Apart from the wild, eerie cry of sea-birds and the boom of the waves there is little to break the sound of the wind, which sweeps over the land from the North Sea, and gives to that already austere waste a further touch of despair.

At Aldeburgh, which is near the region I describe, over one hundred and fifty years ago, the poet George Crabbe was born. The comparatively austere quality of much of his nature poetry—Bryon called him "Nature's sternest painter"—is due to the deep influence of the sights and sounds of his native place. Crabbe's landscapes ar[illegible] seascapes are always reminiscent of this part of Suffolk.

Crabbe's first important poem, "The Village," appeared in 1783. It is written with great vigour and contains many striking examples of realistic description of the darker side of rural life. It marked Crabbe off from his contemporaries and established the arrival of a new poet in English Letters. In contradistinction to bucolic poets who had sung of dance and song on the village green, of the happy rustics who, after the pleasant labours of the day, spent their leisure in idyllic ease or in rural sports, Crabbe described the sad reality of the lot of the English peasant. His unrelieved monotonous drudgery, the pain and disease which wracked his body, the miserable hovel in which he lived. In "The Village" especially, Crabbe is the poet of disillusion.

Crabbe wrote as a social observer, as a surgeon who is prepared to probe the wounds of his patients, as a naturalist in search of the truth. As a result, we find in his poetry the faults of his qualities in a very marked degree. Crabbe is often hurried and careless in diction and sometimes incredibly commonplace. His poetry sometimes consists of a mere catalogue of uninteresting

people or things which kills by dulness. Yet with all this, it would be hard to find elsewhere a more authentic nature poet. His eyes are everywhere. No incident, no queer twist of personality or of character is overlooked. No small detail is alien to his interests or foreign to his method.

Crabbe did not publish anything between the ages of thirty-one and fifty-two, although he wrote quantities of verse which he afterwards destroyed. In the autumn of 1807, at the age of fifty-three, he published "Poems." The principal poem in this volume was "The Parish Register," a long narrative poem in three parts, the first on "Baptisms," the second on "Marriages," and the last on "Burials." One of the most successful poems Crabbe ever wrote appears in the section, "Marriages." It is the story of Phœbe Dawson, which was read and admired by the dying statesman, Charles James Fox, during the last stages of his painful illness. On the whole, however, "The Parish Register" is not to be appreciated for its striking isolated passages or occasional felicities of diction, but for its true and vigorous depiction of village life and manners. Crabbe excels in the tragic. His motives may be trivial, but never his sentiment. In one sense Crabbe may be said to be the Balzac of English poetry. A dark and brooding genius that read deeply "the naked human heart." In the year 1810 appeared "The Borough," a description of the town (Aldeburgh) and its various inmates and activities. Here again Crabbe paints relentlessly the tragedies of human life. He is the stern moralist looking on the darker side of human nature and describing what he saw. Crabbe never ran away from the bad in human nature when he met it, or pretended that it was not there. Hence there is a profound sense of reality in his best poetry.

It is a varied world that passes in review and finds its chronicle in the pages of Crabbe. At times his descriptions of Nature have the clear fidelity of a Dutch landscape, painted by a master's brush. In the same way his characteristics stamp themselves upon the mind and are not forgotten. Because at long last Nature is for Crabbe a reflex for man's feelings and "background

to his life." In "The Borough," he piles detail on detail in the description of the dwellings, and achieves a cumulative effect in his pictures by the use of an authentic descriptive power, which is, of this kind, rare in our literature. "The Borough" is the work of a poet who preferred, as he said himself on one occasion, walking in the streets watching the faces of the passers-by to the finest natural scenery. For Crabbe man is essential, and Nature only a background. Life, Crabbe seems to suggest, is a medley of tortured purposes and cross-currents. Happiness comes only, if at all, to those who expect little, who are content with a modest return from life. Any other view can only lead to disillusion.

Two years after the publication of "The Borough" appeared "Tales In Verse." Several are narratives of deep and tragic interest. Among them may be noted "The Parting Hour," which may have suggested the theme of Tennyson's "Enoch Arden." The last work published by Crabbe during his own lifetime was "Tales of the Hall," which appeared in 1819 in two volumes, and contained a series of narratives loosely strung together and supposed to be told by two half-brothers and a clergyman friend. The poet has grown a little more mellow, a little less harsh in outlook. He has lost moreover to a great extent his eighteenth-century manner. The versification is smooth and easy, the emotion rings true and unforced. Not infrequently it reaches a simple but effective eloquence—for instance in the narration of the adventures of Richard, which was greatly admired both in youth and age by Newman.

Crabbe's personal character is clear and plain. It may be studied with the greatest ease in his letters and the fragments of his diaries which remain. It is sketched with loving care in the memoir written by his son, which forms the first volume of the complete poems of Crabbe, published in eight volumes in 1834. His character, like his verse, was simple and sincere. With Carlyle he held that "our main business is not to see that which lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand." Crabbe's work is of such extreme value because his was a modern mind set in an artificial age: an acute in-

vestigating mind, constantly taking notes, observing contemporary life and laying up stores of knowledge for use later on in his poems. This attitude towards life is seen in another medium at its best in the realistic art of Hogarth, who was to painting what Crabbe is to poetry. His verse at its best, and for that matter at its worst, is far more literal than the prose fiction of his realist immediate predecessors or his contemporaries. In this connection one may compare the complicated plots of the novelists with the simple straightforward narratives of Crabbe.

His real strength lay all the time in the region of psychology—the description and discussion of character in its reactions to other characters and to environment. He has little use for what may be called the high lights of poetry. His tints are subdued to the colour of the materials he works in. He wishes to describe the world around him. His muse is coloured, sometimes overcoloured, by the desolate landscape of his home. The method is really akin to that of a man of science, and as such he has a scientific love of truth and fidelity of observation. But it should also be remembered in justice to Crabbe that, although the general cast of his mind was sombre and relentless in outlook, much of his work bears evidence of a charming and delightful humour. At times he might almost be said to be a minor Jane Austen in verse, and Jane herself remarked that she might have married him. There is something of spring and more of calm as opposed to stormy seas in his poetry than is generally recognised. No consideration of his achievements would be worth while which ignored this side of his nature.

The permanent delight which readers come to find in Crabbe—even those who, like myself, have been nourished on the great romantic poets, feel it in time—is the result of his gradual and patient investigation of motive and temptation, the development of conscience, and the growth of character. These things are at the root of his spell. It is Crabbe, the rural moralist, at work, who insensibly conquers the mind. Well might Lockhart say of him "that as an observer he never opens his eyes in vain."

DIRGE FOR YOUTH.

From the Greek of Mimnermus (floruit 630 B.C.)

We are but as the leaves of spring
That spread beneath the sun;
Short is our time of bourgeoning.
Youth's course is quickly run,
Ere yet 'tis heaven's will
That we know good from ill.

The Fates stand by us grim and mute
With Death or Age for choice;
Short-lived as sunrise is the fruit
Wherein Youth may rejoice,
And we find all too soon
Death is the better boon.

The old have sorrows that appal:
One poverty shall freeze,
One prayed for children most of all,
One's cankered with disease:
To all men here below
Zeus gives abundant woe.

DENIS TURNER.

WAR.

The peat mire sucked my feet, the wild
Wind swept me cry of a child
Left helpless in darkness, and howl
Of mad dogs, tearing flesh and jowl,
Writhing limbs, maggot-sockets eyes gone,
Where once the sun and moonshine shone.

Ravens, diving down the hurricane,
Batter wind for carrion.
Frightened eyes from clinched claw,
Hidden in the shadows of the moor.

Where is now Thy peace, Lord,
Thy Glory in the glitter of a sword?

M. CAMPBELL.

WE MUST GO ON.

How hard to realise that we must go on.
That the long littleness of every day
Still waits to take the place of dearness gone.
How hard to keep the bitterness at bay
And cheap heroics, when the march of feet
Drowns all the melodies we once held sweet.
And scarce admitted dread sharpens familiar faces,
And open graves gape in our pleasant places.

Now love and loyalty must hold the gate
And kinder humour blunt the biting wit.
There will be much to make us desolate,
And flagging days in which to ponder it.
But the green, tendrilled tapestries of spring
Will kiss earth's yawning scars of suffering.
Some things are steadfast, set in light and sound,
And "grief goes over" and the world goes round.

JOYCE T. ROWE.

LE DESESPOIR.

July of the green leaves
Has pawned her warmth.
And my heart, it grieves
Love's flashing strength.

Month of coloured radiance
Steals from sullen eyes,
Lost is her smiling fragrance
And dead her butterflies.

My thoughts of ripening fear
Love's weary playthings, quiver,
Then silenced, stir to hear
The scared leaves shiver.

ROBERT GREACEN.

THE SILVER GARMENT.

Lilies and roses
Poets have said;
Silver fragrance
Softly shed.

They have so little
While to bloom,
They will not silence
The trump of doom.

Colour and scent
From foot to head—
Spread them sweetly
Over the bed.

Where beauty lies
As lie she must,
Roses and lilies:
Dust to dust.

T. WESTON RAMSEY.

THE RIDERS.

Uncannily, side by side,
Death, and Life his bride,
Borne on the leaping steeds of Fate,
By one another ride;
Into uncharted spans of space,
Watched by a myriad eyes they race,
Across new heavens wide:
Through battle shrieks,
Through moans of tides,
Through thunderous impacts of vast skies,
Breaking laughter, rending cries,
Breasting wild seas of agony,
They ride, and ride, and ride,
Uncannily, side by side.

DAVID FRIDLANDER.

THE BEECHES.

Nobly in neo-gothic grandeur stand
The beeches, and their cobra-branches rise
Curving into the skies,
Cathedral-wise:
Magnificently wrought, superbly planned,
Their smooth boles glow like stone of pillared aisles
By candle-light . . . . I do not cleave to church
Or chapel in my search
For God . . . Men smirch
Elohim's thundered word, employ the wiles
Of priest and prelate in dim, holy piles
To buy salvation with a mumbled rite . . . .
I worship here by night,
In the moon's light,
At beauty's shrine, where staff nor rod beguiles.

E. CURT PETERS.

THALATTA.

Here that slow sea of marble crumbles on its beaches,
    An inwrought frieze of deftly-sculptured wave and foam,
Its fluted whorls and volutes moulded to your features,
    Thin, ivory lips, cold cheek, sad eyes and hair of flame.

Chill in his long embrace, when that slow lover takes
    The wanderer to the deep-sea silence of his breast:
There, lulled in hyacinthine dreams, he never wakes,
    But tastes that vague of Nothingness which men call rest.

Might I, too, know the quiet of that cold caress,
    I, too, be moulded to that sculptured frieze of stone,
Here lay aside this self, and enter Nothingness,
    Where neither love nor hate can stir the whitened bone.

F. H. KING.

THE GLORIOUS DEAD.

They were strong and they were many
But they marched on to their doom,
With a lilac in the garden
And the violets still in bloom.
Now the flowers whisper gently
Of the dead that lie below,
While the breezes chatter softly
With strange tales of long ago.

Age old wonders are dews in the twilight
Across the pale transparency of time,
Whose phantom waters gliding through the dusk
Have left them with a sense of the sublime.

JOHN WALLER.

WITHOUT EYES.

All my thoughts run
through my mind
like the strings of a fiddle
tuned by the blind.

The pegs are twisted
by a hand
full-racked, turned in a circle
and then moved back.

The bow is white
and moves so
slow that thoughts of the moment
can scarcely grow.

And so in peace
my mind reveals
the arcs and the tunes that
act conceals.

E. W. NIXON.

ELEGY.

No word spilt by the marvellous mouth
Is strong as his desert. It is
Vain to whimper thus; he would
Outpour a might of song with craft and shock
Were he as I alone in a dark time
With a ruin about his head
Or I as he set under the round and spinning ground
Bombed up in carolling grass,
Giving my chemistry to the rich receiver
And heart a harm.
I would not make an elegy
But that some marking on the sand
That prisons him within its cave
Is one last need which to deny
Were worse than vanity.
But with memorial of his lovely life
Damned now by dust and cindered air
This utters not for weeping.

S. G. LEONARD.

THE YOUNG SHYLOCK, TO LEAH.

Lest the betraying stars should mock surrender
With shadow ducats flung upon the tide;
Lest each heart's falseness doubt not each has lied,
Oh, dare with me to forego all things tender.
No tally of fond traffic shall we render
When dawn, full-sail, beats outward golden plied;
No fortune seek on shores uncharted, wide,
Where perilous bliss destroys a wanton spender.
Nay, girl! Disburse no unsought amorous boons,
Demand no fraction of this heart's full sum;
Lest lunar silver hold us bounden slaves,
And passion suck us through its lost lagoons.
See! The false coins grow faint beneath the waves,
And night an empty coffer has become!

LOCKHART HUDSON.

THE DYING MAN GAZES THROUGH HIS WINDOW AND SPEAKS:

Eyes have lost the power to charm,
Words their potent gift to harm;
Cold am I, and still, and calm:
Cold—what is Death but this?
Cold are the lips that kiss,
Cold, too, the eyes that miss
The earth-pale beauty of the stars.

Before the embers crouching dim,
I gaze upon the meadow's rim,
Where birds intone their evening hymn.
But I am thinking not of those
Who murmur, when night's eyelids close,
Soft pleadings to the cloistered rose.
My thoughts are of a whitened grave. . . .

Blind bats brush past the window-frame,
And vanish mutely as they came.
Bat-like are thoughts that have no name;
Their myriads blunder through the brain,
Tap-tapping like dull drops of rain,
Steeped in the world's bewildered pain . . .
The yearning sky has swooned to grey.

Grey are the years I shoulder now,
Grey are the cob-webs on my brow,
Furrowed by Time's aggressive plough.
Nought is left but a simple "**must**"
And the soulless ethics of the dust,
The sobbing prayer, slow-crumbling crust,
Remorseless terror no man may know.

PETER SOSKICE.

THEY BEAR WITH ME.

Beside the hollyhocks
The Sharons
Paler seem;
Rain daisies
Near the open door
Long since
Have drooped
And bloom no more.
The singing pines
Along the walk
Nod and sway—
(I cannot talk)
The yew trees guard
The open door
And seem to know
You will pass no more.

L. EAGLE.

FRAGRANCE.

Folks tire of money and fine clothes,
Who ever wearied of a rose?
Has any man been angered yet,
Or bored, by a white violet?
Who dreams of meanness, hate or crime,
Walking a lawn at lily time?
He who smells lilac in the night
Knows right from wrong and black from white.
Ethics may shame, and facts appal,
But fragrance will outlast them all.

MARGARET COOPER.

MY GHOST SHALL WALK . . . .

My ghost shall walk by daylight, with the flowers.
I always loved the sun to warm me through,
And birds who used to sing their songs for me
Shall sing as gladly as they used to do.
Winds will not stir my ghostly garments grey,
But I shall feel their passing on my face,
My feet will not disturb the fragrant grass,
And where I walk I shall not leave a trace;
But I shall be aware of cooling streams,
Sweet scents within the pollen-laden air;
Fresh winds, warm earth, hot sun and song of birds,
These shall I love anew and deem more fair.
Not for me will the midnight sojourning,
The unquiet ghost who frightens bird and child;
Not for me the owl-loud night so dark and cold,
The wind that howls a song both sad and wild.
When I am coffined deep within the earth
My ghost, I vow, will be a happy one,
Friend to the flowers, companion of the birds,
Content to walk with beauty in the sun.
By daylight I shall go the ways I know,
Sun-warmed and happy as I used to be;
No one will see me pass: only the birds,
And they will sing more sweetly still for me.

ELIZABETH TEMPLE WELLS.

METEOR.

A shooting star
flashed across the sky,
I watched it cast its transient gleam,
making the night seem mystical . . . .
a perfect night to dream.

EDNA HAMILTON.

THE BROWNINGS—AND OTHERS.

Dear, if we had met when our world was still young
In the gold of our dawn, lit with rainbows of dew,
What a chaplet of shimmering gems had been strung
Out of your love for me—my love for you.

But since we have met in the day far-spent,
(The sunrise was missed and the morning lost)
We have spilled no drop of our sweet content,
We have drunk of love to the uttermost.

We have drunk that wine of joy triune
In which body and mind and soul take share,
Heard the Heaven-made song, set to perfect tune
Only heard when souls are awake and aware.

Our golden chalice is gleaming still;
Its magic draught is still pure and strong;
In the sunset hush we may sup at will
To the melody of the GOD-dreamed song.

Though we lost our morning and wasted our noon
We have spent our day in a radiance of light.
Now we drink the dregs to the tranquil moon,
And shall sleep in hope through restoring night.

NINA WITHEROW.

OF JOY AND GRIEF.

If joy is mine, I share it with a friend
Before its first bright radiance has flown;
But when the throes of grief on me descend,
This, I must bear alone.

MARGARET E. BRUNER.

BUTTERFLY BALLET.

Cool fingers upon fevered brow seemed the dark wood
Wrapped in green gloom, wherein I stood.
Sudden, before mine eyes
Came myriad butterflies;
Fluttering, now here, now there.
In the still dark air.
Like dancing stars their white wings gleamed,
To me, unearthly strange it seemed:
Naught moved, 'midst the tall trees
Save, dancing soundless, only these:
The wood was bright with wings,
They seemed enchanted things.
Yet, as I gazed, they went:
With them my brief content:
And then, once more I stood
Alone, in the dark wood.

KATHLEEN M. HUGHES.

THE WOOD.

Of the great trees of the wood
Only slippery stumps remain,
Those giant trees' piteous feet
Stained black by rain.

Here purple willow herb triumphs,
Like conqueror over his foe,
And where grew trees that touched the sky
Mushrooms grow.

But birds in boughs sing some faint song,
Some rustling makes the breeze,
Though there are neither birds nor boughs,
And no green trees.

A. W. BARTON.

DEVON SALUTE.

O land of lovely laughter
And summer-sleepy leas,
White gulls that follow after
Light winds o'er buoyant seas;

O lovely coast indented
With warm secluded bays,
Where, stretched at ease, contented,
A man may lie and laze;

O shire of sunlight shifting
O'er rocky head and tor,
Or white or gray clouds drifting
O'er wastes of royal moor;

O paradise of flowers
That bud and bloom untaught,
Whose weathered red church towers
Set feverisn haste at naught;

O home of sturdy seamen
And kindly folk and true,
O Devon of the seamen,
My heart goes out to you.

Out from the haunts unholy
Of stunted urban men,
The hate, the greed, the folly,
Out from the sordid Wen,

Where trade as servile poses
And pranks itself in lies,
Cuts down the wild hedge-roses,
Befouls the guiltless skies;

Out from the harlot city
That sells for tainted gold
Earth's beauty without pity
Earth's beauty from of old;

Makes labour a drab sorrow
And all its hope but dole,
And gives for glad to-morrow
Starvation to the soul;

Out from this shabby evil
Of smug futility,
This playground of the Devil,
I hail, O Devon, thee!

E. B. W. CHAPPELOW.

BALLAD OF THE LANDGRAVINE.

Though she was a Landgrave's wife
Sweet simplicity crowned her life.

The Landgrave, blessed with ample store,
Sought how to increase much to more

And she on deeds of mercy bent
Sought means by which to circumvent

His protest when she kindly fed
The hungry poor with loaves of bread.

She stood before the castle gate,
Thin, pale, compassionate.

A crowd of beggars gathered there
She gave to each a liberal share.

The Landgrave chanced to come along
And saw her feed the hungry throng.

He, finding her thus occupied,
Forthwith her conduct he decried.

"What in your apron have I seen?"
He asked the gentle Landgravine.

"My apron, as you see, encloses
Beautiful clusters of red roses."

He looked and there forsooth instead
Were roses where he thought was bread.

What miracle this to intervene
And justify the Landgravine!

What happened when he went away?
We cannot say—

But this fond hope we entertain—
The roses turned to bread again.

FRANK HARTMAN.

L'HORLOGE.

Les heures dans la nuit, cette horloge les compte,
Me réveillant parfois, mais en veillant sur moi;
Sous les evênements qui descendent et montent,
Invisible, inconnue, aveugle et prévoyante,
Carcasse de machine, et, comme un cœur d'amante,
Veille sans rêve aucun, sur mes rêves la loi.

JEAN WAHL.

COMPETITIONS

The last Quarterly Competition was won by L. Cole for "In A Drawing Room," to whom the Guinea Prize has been awarded. Three competitors tied for second place—John Lepper, A. V. Roberts and Y. Coe —and book prizes have been sent to them. Leonard Clark, H. L. Senior, A. J. Griffith, Kenneth Little and Dray Stevens followed with equal votes, and lastly Vivian D'Witt, Mary I. E. Dolphin and Herbert Bluen.

The Quarterly Competitions will be continued. A Prize of One Guinea is offered for the best verse contribution in the current issue. The enclosed voting slip should be filled in and posted to the address thereon. Book prizes are awarded to those who record a sufficient number of votes to indicate the possibility of a second choice.

We have received information that the Twenty Dollar Competition is to be awarded on a choice from the contents of the four issues for 1940, to be made by someone prominent in English Letters whose name will be announced in a later number.

THE POEMS OF W. H. DAVIES, 1940.

MANY poets in the last few years, as though with some sort of prevision of an end to their period if not of themselves, have hastened to collect their work. One of the most interesting of these is the Collected Poems of W. H. Davies, issued recently by Messrs. Cape at the modest price of 7/6. For what novel will provide the reader with over five hundred pages which can be read, re-read or dipped into as an older world dipped into its Virgil with the fatal certainty of finding some pearl of light or wisdom.

The 1934 edition of Mr. Davies' poems is now out of print and this volume includes his three subsequent books, the last of them, "The Loneliest Mountain," appearing in 1939. Here then is the life's work of the poet, 636 poems which makes the younger writer feverishly count up the number of his own efforts in despair. But Mr. Davies has been fortunate enough to be able to devote a long life to the making of exquisite lyrics. If there is a certain monotony about the flowing of the stream, if many of his poems savour a little too much of a literary trick well learned from the right sources, we forgive him for the sake of the twenty or thirty poems which ensure his place—no mean one—in the history of our literature. And reading these pellucid poems one is back in the past, for he writes of a world that seems to us now as distant as

> . . . wild Pacific when he leaps and falls
> At Rarotonga, off a coral coast.

To-day, when we are waging a war on the vastest scale known to history upon the issue of which undoubtedly hangs the whole fate of the very existence of the intellectual at all, the life and work of Mr. Davies appears to us to be something of a symbol. In those large and spacious days as dim as the coastline of a country one is leaving behind perhaps for ever, the man who felt that pressing urge within him to write poetry could rent for a few shillings his country cottage and

give himself up deliciously to his work. By a community obsessed with stock exchange values he would be considered insane, but he was allowed to carry on if able to defeat starvation. And how many of us do not count among our unmarketable but most precious treasures the experience of reading for the first time such a lyric as "The Kingfisher," and how often to-day do we not echo the lines:

> I also love a quiet place
> That's green, away from all mankind?

WREY GARDINER.

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETRY.

By

C. B. TOOSEY.

CONTEMPORARY American poetry is a vast subject: for America itself is a vast continent. Contemporary American poets are universal and diversified, differing hugely in race and environment, but universal in their knowledge of the human life which has an inter-state similarity throughout the continent. This universal diversity is apparent, both in content, form and language.

Puritan New England, the giant cosmopolitan capitol of New York City, the wide plain states of the Middle West, where the Mississippi River, "Father of Waters," rises upon its two thousand five hundred and sixty mile way, are portrayed in landscape and people. While some poets prefer to use traditional European forms and language, others are experimental both in verse structure and language pattern. But every poet is conscious of America, the nation, the continent, below his concern with a particular state or part of the American community.

Robert Frost writes of New England, and as a nature poet is unexcelled in beautiful detail, as he shows in his poem, "DESIGN":

I found a dimpled spider, fat and white,
On a white heal-all, holding up a moth
Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth—
. . . A snow-white spider, a flower like froth
And dead wings curved like a paper kite.
. . . What brought the kindred spider to that height,
Then steered the white moth thither in the night?
What but design of darkness to appal? . . . .

Hilda Doolittle, who writes under her initials H.D., returns to Greece for much of her inspirations, and she is here the representative of the Imagists, a school of writers led by Amy Lowell and Ezra Pound, whose manifesto stressed the use of concentrated, hard and clear images in poetry, and the creation of new rhythms for new moods in verse-structure. This is the last verse of her poem, "HOLY SATYR":

Most holy Satyr,
Like a goat,
hear this our song,
accept our leaves,
love-offering,
return our hymn:
like echo fling
a sweet song
answering note for note.

Edna St. Vincent Millay was also born in the New England State of Maine, and her poems are deep in the universal heart of America: this is from one of her Sonnets:

I know I am but summer to your heart,
And not the full four seasons of the year;
. . . Wherefore I say: "O love, as summer goes,
I must be gone, steal forth with silent drums,
. . . Else will you seek, at some not distant time,
Even your summer in another clime."

Edwin Arlington Robinson, although born in Maine, has lived most of his time in New York City, and his poem, "Miniver Cheevy," has a city sophistication:

. . . Miniver lived the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing,
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.
. . . . .
. . . Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head, and kept on thinking.
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking—

Carl Sandburg comes from the plain State of Illinois, and is the son of a Scandinavian immigrant. He is concerned with the city and its ironic contrasts, as in his: "AND SO TO-DAY":

He was a tall scar-face battler
With his face in a newspaper
. . . Reading the want ads. first and last
The letters of the word JOB, "J-O-B",
. . . The honorable orators,
. . . Pronouncing the syllables "Sac-ri-fice",
. . . Do their tongues ever shrivel with a pain of fire
Across these simple syllables "Sac-ri-fice"?

Vachel Lindsay, born in Illinois, gives an idea of the American Indian life which has so influenced contemporary American life, in his "IN PRAISE OF JOHNNY APPLESEED":

. . . Painted kings in the midst of the clearing
Heard him asking his friends the eagles
To guard each planted seed and seedling.
Then he was a god, to the red man's dreaming,
Then the chiefs brought treasures grotesque and fair—
Magical trinkets and pipes and guns,
Beads and furs from their medicine-lair—
Stuck holy feathers in his hair. . . . .

Nor must the coloured people be forgotten in the diverse and universal contemporary poets of America, and Emma Magin Bissell sings of their charm in her small poem, "PICCANINNY."

Little piccaninny,
So chubby and so fat,
Sitting in your Mammy's lap,
With curly hair so black,
Won't you sing a song for me,
And roll them pretty eyes for me?
Say, "Nighty Night," then go to sleep,
Before dark shadows creep.

SHORTER NOTICES.

The Wan Water and Other Poems. Dorothy Margaret Paulin. Blackwell. 6/-.

The Poet Speaks. An Anthology for Choral Speaking. Methune. 5/6.

A Second Book of Sea Poems and Others. Doreen C. Watts. Channing Press. 1/6.

The Wayfarer. Wallace Connon. Channing Press. 1/6.

Shanghai. Poems. P. R. Kaikini. New Book Company, Bombay. 1 Rupee.

The River. Julia Reeve Wood. Frederick Muller. 3/6.

Most people who read magazines devoted to poetry will have picked out the name of Dorothy Margaret Paulin from among the mass of other poets, knowing that her contribution will be one notable for a certain fire-like purity and sincerity of feeling. If her language at times inclines a little too much towards excessiveness, a rather indiscriminate too purple richness of words, it is easy to see that Mrs. Paulin is as sensitive to colour as any artist. From a pearl pale dream to a deep purple pool she takes her colours with a palette knife, but beyond this the whole is infused with a fire of feeling that few modern pictures show. The fifty-five poems printed here are of varying merit. "While of Unsound Mind" is intensely felt and dramatically effective, and a gramophone recording has been made of it. Some of the poems, including that which gives its name to the collection, "The Wan Water," are in the Scots dialect, a short glossary for the information of the foreigner being printed at the end of the volume, beautifully produced by Basil Blackwell and dedicated to All Lovely Aprils. Another poet noticed in this column has favoured March and May, bearing out the popular conception of Spring as the poets' quarter. Who will say a good word for the rose garden of June? Although we are all in the words of "Perplexity," one of the outstanding vernacular poems in the book,

> Just hauldin' on, dour an' bewildered,
> Under some ill, sad yoke.

There is some difference of opinion among poetry readers on whether a poem should be judged on its oral merits or its appeal to that inner ear of the mind which only the printed page permits. But that there has been for many years past a notable revival of interest in Spoken Poetry is undeniable. Marjorie Gullan and Clive Sansom have made in "The Poet Speaks" a very wide selection from sources as far removed as English, Scottish and American poems and translations from the Chinese, Hebrew, Egyptian and Arabic. The student of modern verse drama will find seven examples from well-known plays. Matter chosen ranges from a Hymn of Akhnaton and several excerpts from the Bible to W. H. Auden. Apart from its use to schools and those engaged in choral work, it is a very readable anthology.

A Second Book of Sea Poems and Others, by Doreen C. Watts, has an attractive illustrated frontispiece by E. M. Channing-Renton, the former Editor of "Poetry Quarterly." "Anna Marybelle," the Story of a Figurehead, is a ballad of an old sea captain's lost love. "King Neptune," a poem on the stone bust of the sea king in Tresco Abbey gardens in the Scilly Isles, is pleasant, but it is when Miss Watts recollects childhood days wandering on Bolberry Cliffs that she is at her best, or describing places such as Shipley Bridge. Of more poignant interest to-day is the poem, "September 1939," and many of us may be thinking in these present sorrows of days spent sailing on Devon seas.

> Do you remember then
> The wind's song in the rigging, high aloft?
> The cry of wheeling sea-birds? A grey morn
> Heralding radiant day? and sun splashed decks?
> Those quiet evenings when the stars looked down
> Smiling upon the waters as we talked?
> Night breezes blowing—and there close at hand
> Some lonely lightship with a flickering eye
> Saying "God-Speed"?

Owing to the early military duties of its founder, The Channing Press was one of the first victims of the war. Most of its publications, however, can still be obtained from the Grey Walls Bookshop, Billericay, Essex publishers of "Poetry Quarterly." "The

Wayfarer," by Wallace Connon, a slim volume of thirty poems, was the last book issued by the Press. It is by the author of "Empire Cavalcade" and contains some excerpts therefrom. The dedication is to "The Two Months," March and May, to which the poet is especially grateful for helping him in his work. It is in the little poem, "Aspiration," that Mr. Connon touches a chord to which most poets will be sensitive. He terminates:

> Deep in the secret places hid
> From prying eyes, and barbed tongues so keen
> To fray the golden threads that bind
> Me to my star in heaven high,
> Lie all my heart's desires,
> If you should see, speak kindly of my dreams.

In "Shanghai," Mr. Kaikini has made a considerable advance on his former book, "This Civilisation," reviewed in these pages a year or so ago. Those who look to India for an exotic poetry of pale hands and temple bells will be disappointed by this volume. Young India is as modern as anything that comes out of Bloomsbury or New York. The lot of factory workers and the victims of war are the subjects of many of Mr. Kaikini's poems. "The Twilight Land" is a masterly description of the horrors of war-devastated China and to-day, alas, of how many other lands?

> It is the dreadful land of twilight
> Of unceasing uncertainty and sure death
> Where men move about
> Like tiny pieces of tissue paper in the air
> And with a gust of wind
> Are scattered about.

One is always refreshed by this poet's sincerity and the feeling that from Shanghai to London those who write poetry have many things in common.

"The River" is a serious poem which begins descriptively with the English scene. The struggle of man from his early beginning is shown, together with virtues of courage, fortitude and resignation which have marked his progress through the ages. To a generation in distress, "The River" brings a message of hope. As a writer, Mrs. Wood is faithful to the English tradition and, as Stephen Gwynn says, her Spenserean Stanzas are "full of beauty."